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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

*The Problem of Conduct: A Study in the Phenomenology of Ethics.* By ALFRED EDWARD TAYLOR. London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd.; New York, The Macmillan Co., 1901.—pp. viii, 501.

This work is practically identical, the author tells us, with one which was awarded the "Green Moral Philosophy Prize" in the University of Oxford for the year 1899, the topic proposed to competitors for discussion being "The Reciprocal Relations between Ethics and Metaphysics." By way of explaining the fact that a work undertaken in such a connection should contain a whole chapter of polemic directed against Green, Mr. Taylor remarks in his preface that he deems it a real service to Green's memory "to disentangle his admirable account of moral institutions from the untenable metaphysical assumptions of the earlier chapters of the *Prolegomena to Ethics*." The author's prefatory acknowledgment of far-reaching indebtedness to Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*—a debt of which the frequent references to Bradley's works in footnotes is but an inadequate expression—indicates the general tenor of the thought. The standpoint as a whole may be fairly characterized as a criticism of Green from the point of view of Bradley. The work represents also a doctrine that is being preached at present by many different voices, and with many different shades of opinion. We have here still another declaration of the necessity of rendering ethics independent of metaphysics. The data of ethics, like those of modern psychology, are not to be prejudged by any metaphysical bias, but must be subjected to the same method of treatment that is applicable in all the natural sciences. This main thesis is to be established by elaborate reviews of the facts, and by analyses of average moral judgments. The distinction between what actually *is* and what *ought to be* will not bear scrutiny. We must appeal to the facts, and ask what are the actual standards recognized by mankind. Such questions, which give rise to detailed investigations into the actual ethical practices and theories of present or past society, can alone give us insight into the nature of moral ideals. 'Experience' is the sole source of our knowledge of matters ethical as it is of all else, the "high *priori* road" being merely a fiction of philosophers.

The introductory chapter of the volume, which states the problem to be raised, contains what the author, borrowing Aristotle's phraseology, terms a 'logical' or abstract discussion of the same material

that is treated in a more concrete and 'physical' manner in the rest of the work. In regard to the relation between ethics and metaphysics, there are three alternative possibilities to be considered: (1) Ethics may be a mere derivative and off-shoot of metaphysics, consisting solely in the systematic application of metaphysical first principles to the subject-matter furnished by the facts of human conduct. (2) Or this relation may be reversed and ethics be regarded as the primary science, while metaphysics is employed with "the task of ascertaining what general conclusions about the nature of the universe can be drawn from the data supplied by ethics." (3) Or it may be that neither is derived from the other, that each is independent in subject matter and mode of treatment, although the two spheres may come into contact at special points (pp. 2, 3). After an enumeration of those who, with more or less qualification, may be regarded as exponents of each of these views, the author announces his own allegiance to the third position mentioned, maintaining that "ethics should be regarded as a purely 'positive' or 'experimental,' and not as a 'speculative' science." As the establishment of this view is the concern of all the rest of the treatise, and as the procedure is rather tortuous, it is of course impossible to follow the details in a mere review of the work. It may be sufficient simply to cite the author's own introductory statement of the threefold character of the argument. "We shall first of all offer some reflections of a general kind upon the points in which a science founded upon metaphysics ought to differ from one that is purely positive and experimental." "Next we shall try to meet and answer some of the reasoning by which the metaphysical moralists have sought to show that there can be no satisfactory theory of conduct apart from a metaphysical foundation. We shall then go on, in the main body of our essay, to show the impossibility of basing ethics upon a previous system of metaphysics, by a detailed examination of some of the principal facts of which ethics has to take account" (p. 5).

Probably the vast majority of ethical thinkers at the present time would unequivocally agree in maintaining that ethics is not to be viewed as an entirely derivative science, whose principles are to be *a priori* deduced from some formal metaphysical principle. Yet such a concession would not apparently enforce the conclusion that ethics is merely an empirical science, bearing precisely the same relations to metaphysics as physics or any other natural science does. Even granting Mr. Taylor's contention that "all knowledge is 'empirical,' in the sense of being concerned in the last resort with the description of matters of fact or experience," and without accentuating the distinction between scientific

‘description’ and ‘explanation,’ the superficial character of which the author takes pains to set forth, we may nevertheless hold that our ultimate metaphysical notions exert a more intimate and determining influence upon our theory of morality than upon the physical sciences in general. It is certainly one of the tasks of metaphysics to ascertain what the ontologic significance of human personality may be, and what relation it bears to the universe at large. And our attitude towards this question must inevitably affect our view of the problem of human conduct; whereas to the physicist it is of little moment what decision metaphysics may reach regarding the ultimate constitution of matter. If one’s metaphysics leads to a view of man simply as one object among other objects, and the ‘self’ as the mere result of psychological and biological necessities, then the naturalistic categories that are applicable to all natural science will be considered as adequate also for the description of moral phenomena. But the very same *facts of experience* must necessarily be otherwise described, if one entertains a radically different conception of the ‘self.’ And our description will be an equally faithful ‘empirical’ account. This discussion can, however, be raised more profitably in a later portion of the present review.

Mr. Taylor has devoted several pages in his second chapter, which considers “some arguments in favor of a metaphysical ethic,” to the conventional distinction between ‘normative’ and ‘descriptive’ science. He is of the opinion that the distinction between the ‘ought’ and the ‘is’ is not to be confined to the sphere of moral science—a fact which, he thinks, “may easily be seen by an appeal to the current language of unprejudiced thought” (p. 53). Logic, æsthetics, mathematics, in short, all science is normative. The only distinction is one of degree and not of kind. “What ought to be in all departments of inquiry, means what is demanded in order to make our accounts of experience consistent with what is assumed to be known of its general formal characteristics” (p. 56). “If ethics tells us how we ought to act, and æsthetics what we ought to admire, and logic how we ought to reason, histology, for instance, tells us what we ought to see under the microscope” (p. 54). Surely this is rather an easy solution of a distinction that some of us have fondly believed to be more deeply rooted, and it is rather startling to be told that we are obligated to see certain things under the microscope in the same sense that we are obligated to refrain from murder. Within the sphere of moral action, the obligation certainly has a reference to a different kind of voluntary control than that which can be exercised upon the cross-sections within the field of vision under a microscope. And an appeal to the common

consciousness, which expresses itself in "the current language of unprejudiced thought," may also confirm the distinction, in spite of the fact that common parlance may still sanction the physician's usage of words when he says "'There ought to be altered light-reflexes,' or knee-jerks or heaven knows what, 'along with the symptoms of this patient'" (p. 53). It is difficult to refrain from mentioning that the quibbling involved in the argumentation at this point might be illustrated also from many other pages of the work. As far as the discussion in this context is of serious moment, it is obviously meant to establish the hypothetical character of moral obligation, and to show the "disastrous" effects of categorical imperatives. But the conditional nature of moral obligations can scarcely be demonstrated by pointing to the fact that in all fields of inquiry we demand of ourselves rational consistency. The same contention would be equally forcible in demonstrating the hypothetical and relative character of truth. The author, it would seem, would readily grant this conclusion, since he tells us on page 13 (and elsewhere) that "without committing ourselves to the paradox of solipsism, we can well afford to make the admission that the difference between truth and falsehood means ultimately for each individual the difference between an adequate and consistent, and an inadequate and inconsistent account of the contents of his own personal experience." But when we make that admission, the only thing that saves us from solipsism, it seems to the present reviewer, is the recognition of the fact that the demand for coherence and ultimate unity is a result of the inner constitution of rationality itself, of our rational nature which we must posit as universal and valid for all thinking beings—*semper, ubique, omnibus*, to adopt the offending "ecclesiastical catchword."

The third and longest chapter of the volume is called "The Roots of Ethics." In our attempts to find an appropriate starting-point for our science, we run the risk "of choosing our point of departure either too high or too low in the scale of psychical development." We must choose between two extremes. 'Obligation,' 'duty,' etc., are very complex concepts that appear only at a high level of development, while, on the other hand, our knowledge of animal psychology is in a very elementary condition. Hence, ethical investigators must regard it as their first task "to ascertain what is the simplest and most rudimentary form in which the distinctively moral sentiments can be detected in specifically human experience" (p. 91). The phrase 'ethical sentiments' is chosen as a protest "against a popular view according to which the business of ethical psychology consists in the analysis of

*motives*," and also because the word 'motive' has been "a perfect hive of confusions." Ethics must be founded "rather upon an analysis of the reflective judgment than upon an analysis of the action judged" (p. 100). Ethics, then, as an empirical science based upon the wider science of psychology, must (1) "supply a psychological description of these emotional processes in simple and, as far as possible, in non-symbolic terms"; (2) "write a history of their development, regarded as a chapter in the general psychological evolution of humanity"; and (3) "give some account of the classes of action by which, in various stages of the history of civilization, these emotional processes are aroused." Accordingly, there are three main divisions of a scientific theory of ethics: "(1) an analytical, and (2) a genetic theory of the moral sentiments, and (3) an account of the moral ideal and of moral progress" (p. 102). Hence, ethics may be described as we please, "either as the *theory of moral sentiments*, or as the *theory of the moral judgment*"; but if we choose the latter designation we must remember that the moral judgment is based upon moral sentiments. The simple and peculiarly ethical emotions are the feelings of approval and disapproval. The 'good' is that which we view with feelings of approval, the 'bad' with sentiments of disapprobation. This "irreducible minimum," the author is aware, will prove unsatisfactory to two very different sets of critics, whose objections he proceeds at some length to anticipate and overrule. But after all has been said, it seems to the present writer that those moralists who attempt to explain the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation by more simple experiences have at least the advantage, not only of simplicity which Mr. Taylor freely grants, but also of a greater degree of consistency with what would seem to be the fundamental implicates of the author's own general position, and his apparent view of what really constitutes genetic description. On the other hand, those who insist on the ultimate nature of 'obligation,' 'responsibility,' etc., may content themselves with Butler's analysis that, whether they are highly complex notions or not, they are involved "in the very idea of reflex approbation." The author's long account of the manner in which the self-consciousness of personality gradually arises, and of the way in which the external sanctions of society and religion become transformed into internal obligation, although interesting and instructive in some respects, attains neither greater nor less success than has attended all such attempts in the history of ethical speculation. It does not seem to contain anything of fundamental and little of detailed originality.

The concept of *merit* "has presumably passed through much the

same stages as those of *obligation* and *responsibility*," but the treatment here is of great importance, since it brings with it the statement that ethics "must take the form of a theory of values" (p. 165). If such is seriously the essential form of our science, the recognition and presentation of the fact seems to be surprisingly tardy. Indeed, the reader, during his perusal of the first 165 pages of *The Problem of Conduct*, seemed justified in his despair of finding the expression of such a view, especially in light of the statement that all sciences are alike normative in character. Moreover, it is not clear how that position can be reconciled with the passing remarks on p. 165 that science "finds in the universe nothing to praise or blame, but only things to understand," and that such an attitude is not that of ethics. Mr. Taylor explains that he refrained from using the terms 'value' and 'worth' in the early part of his treatise in order "to guard against the metaphysical implication that might to some minds seem to lurk in the use of the word 'worth,' " and, in particular, against the "dangerous misconception" that there is any such thing as 'absolute worth' in morality.

Since all 'values' are relative, and belong "only to those things the possession of which affords satisfaction to sentient beings," the standard of worth must be the measure of enjoyment resulting from the gratification of the needs of such beings. The phrase 'absolute worth,' therefore, can mean nothing but permanence and unconditionality of enjoyment, which is equivalent to saying that the worth of certain acts or qualities "depends only upon the conditions involved in the very existence of human society in general" (p. 168). "Thus there is nothing in the proposition that ethics is a theory of values which really militates against our claim that ethics is a purely empirical science. It is for empirical psychology to say what qualities are and what are not of 'absolute' worth for human beings." This conclusion, it may be remarked, is not altogether unequivocal. Of course we must appeal to experience to ascertain what needs men actually do feel, how such needs actually are satisfied, the various values that men do as a matter of fact ascribe to different kinds of satisfaction, and how such judgments of worth vary at different stages of the development of the individual and of the race. But, is it not equally true that empirical psychology is interested in these phenomena simply as existential facts of the psychic life of mankind—facts, the existence of which we have to understand, but which, as psychologists, we can neither "praise nor blame." But if moral values are to be valid at all, we cannot rest content with simply pointing to the fact of the existence of feelings of

approval and disapproval. As rational beings, we demand the *ratio cur* of our approval. Moral judgments are indeed based upon the moral sentiments, but, in beings who are rational as well as sentient, reason demands that our 'sentiments' be capable of rationalization. Is not the old formulation of this distinction still relevant? The psychology of ethics can tell us by what inner processes we recognize the virtuous act, or what the nature of the feelings is with which men regard it, but it cannot answer the cognate question, which to some of us seems to be the uniquely ethical problem, "What constitutes morality?" or, "What is the quality in any act which leads men to pronounce it virtuous?" Of course Mr. Taylor, like all other writers on ethics, has an answer to the latter question. The *rationale* of our pronouncements of worth, as gathered from the context now under review, lies in the fact that some satisfactions have greater 'permanence' and 'unconditionality' than others. This is certainly one theory which is not lightly to be put aside, and which in various forms has frequently found systematic expression. But it cannot claim for itself any securer basis in empirical fact than many another rival theory. Such a theory is just as much or just as little 'speculative' as any other theory of morals, and is not to be enforced upon us by the magic word 'empirical.'

In the concluding pages of this important third chapter, Mr. Taylor explains why the terms 'desire' and 'will' have been avoided in the preceding portions of his treatise. His object evidently was to indicate his "agreement with those psychologists who refuse to recognize 'conation' as an original and unanalyzable feature of experience by the side of cognition and feeling" (p. 170). He thinks that, according to the believers in the 'tripartite' character of mind, the element of conation is necessary to account for "the execution of movements adapted towards securing the experiences which are anticipated with pleasure or avoiding those anticipated with pain." But there remains nothing that cannot be resolved into cognitive and emotional elements, if we remember that psychologically motion is nothing but a succession of complex sensations accompanied by changes of feeling-tone. The misbegotten belief in conation as an ultimate element is due to the abstractions of the physicist or the physiologist, for motion in their sense of the word "is not movement as actually experienced, but a mere abstraction from experience." There have been other and, in my opinion, possibly weightier arguments advanced, for a belief in the 'will,' than the one which the author thus dismisses. But, however that may be, one may surely say that the psychic processes which the 'new psychology' regards as primary are, as Professor Münsterberg

has been of late vigorously reminding us, just as much abstractions from 'real' experience as the concepts of physics are. If physics deals with physical processes as if there were no mind, empirical psychology treats of psychic processes without consideration of any unity of consciousness, and both standpoints may be described as equally abstract, each alike resulting in "a mere partial representation of a part of the full concrete experienced events."

In the fourth chapter, Mr. Taylor passes to a consideration of "the material nature of morality." Based on elaborate and rather tedious analyses of specific virtues such as 'justice,' 'chastity,' 'truthfulness,' and the like, the conclusion is reached that there is, "in all our moral actions and judgments, radical and irreducible duality of development along diverging lines" (p. 179). "Altruism and egoism are divergent developments from the common psychological root of primitive ethical sentiment." Neither type can be reduced to the other, nor is there any more comprehensive formula into which both may be resolved. This view, from the standpoint of the philosophical demand for ultimate consistency and unity, the author is fully aware, amounts "to a confession that moral theory is hopelessly bankrupt." "But the bankruptcy is not peculiar to ethics," inasmuch as the current concepts of physics, like those of empirical sciences in general, "seem to involve assumptions no less inconsistent than those made by the moralist." Universal egoism and universal altruism end in equally impossible paradoxes, "and the apparent subsumption of both under a common name by the theory of self-realization, turns out on closer inspection to be little more than a piece of verbal legerdemain" (p. 193). It is impossible here to give a detailed summary of this discussion; the argumentation is acute and well-sustained, and the illustrations are numerous and well-chosen. The opportunity is not to be resisted, and the author does not fail to take full advantage of the scope thus afforded to exhibit his really striking talent for setting forth the apparently hopeless dilemmas and puzzles of ethical casuistry. For illustration, we may cite the following: "Is Hegel, for instance, to go on with the *Phänomenologie* while German national life is being extinguished by the cannon at Jena, or to shoulder his musket and do what he can to repel the invader?" (p. 198).

In practice such questions are decided "by the social customs of our day and class," although the 'self-regarding' and 'benevolent' aspects of morality are imperfectly combined in our ordinary notions. Mr. Taylor, of course, points out and insists very strongly "that, in the majority of cases, the path of self-cultivation and the path of social

service coincide," but he is more interested in emphasizing the position that full and entire harmony between self-completion and self-surrender is impossible on any theory whatsoever. Hence "morality is inevitably a matter of compromise between conflicting tendencies" (p. 277). The conclusions reached in the fourth chapter, regarding the types of virtue, are reëxamined, retailed anew in a slightly different form, and thus reënforced by the investigation of "moral ideals and moral progress," which occupies the fifth chapter. Before passing to other points of the treatment, special attention should be called to Mr. Taylor's admirable insistence upon the view "that human development needs for its complete interpretation the ancient principle of conscious teleology as well as the principle of unconscious evolution" (p. 232), and also to his fine remarks, directed against "the extravagant opinion that nothing is morally blameworthy except failure," for the purpose of vindicating "the moral sentiments of the unsophisticated by showing that it is morally better to fail in some purposes than to succeed in others" (p. 254).

Mr. Taylor endeavors to anticipate the criticisms by which "Hegelian egoists of the school of Green" and also "evolutionary altruists," like Spencer, may attempt to refute the views advanced regarding the duality of the types, ideals, and progress of morality. Such evolutionary views of ethics as Spencer's rest upon a confusion of 'evolution' and 'progress,' the identification of which is due to a misconception of biological development and adaptation. One might point out, however, that an evolutionary moralist could maintain that, whether the development of human society be due to 'unconscious evolution' or to 'conscious teleology,' nevertheless, increased socialization necessarily tends towards the reconciliation of egoistic and altruistic conduct. Such a rejoinder, however, Mr. Taylor believes is refuted by a recital of the facts. With advancing civilization the two lines become increasingly divergent.—In regard to the former set of objectors mentioned, who argue that the author's views "are vitiated by the unphilosophical abstraction from one another of the individual and his environment," the thinker of Hegelian type may justly reply that Mr. Taylor labors under a misconception, clearly indicated from the very phrase "metaphysical egoists" which he uses to describe the position. The Hegelian insists upon a *synthesis*, but not upon an absolute *identification*. A synthesis of differences—even of opposites—does not imply, it is needless to remark, that all differences are annulled, or that one of two opposites must be resolved into the other. It is an 'abstract identity' that Mr. Taylor has been seeking, and because he fails

to find such an identity he despairs of any ultimately synthetic principles. Naturally, if one agrees with Mr. Taylor in viewing the 'self' as "a chaotic and mutually repellant aggregate" of "various cravings for satisfaction of various kinds" (p. 254), the conclusions reached in this study in the "phenomenology of ethics" are unavoidable. But these views, reached from such a point of departure, do not furnish an adequate reply to those who find their starting point in a different concept of personality. Of course, Mr. Taylor could retort that here we are relapsing into metaphysical speculation, and point to his refutation of Green's treatment of the 'self' to expose the futility of trying to escape so easily from the rigorous restrictions of a psychological account. But it would not be difficult to show that his own notion of the 'self' is equally metaphysical, or speculative, or abstract as any other concept of the 'self,' and as such exercises inevitable influence upon his mode of viewing the *facts* of the moral life. Moreover, whatever may be said for or against Hegel's or Green's concepts of selfhood, it is not clear that an examination of 'experienced' facts forces upon us the notion of the 'self' as an aggregate. For example, Butler certainly accentuated the need of appealing to the actual psychological facts of human nature in order to ascertain the nature of morality, and the result was that human nature had to be viewed as a "constitution," "system," or "hierarchy," and not in any sense as a chaotic aggregate. And it cannot be claimed that the one notion is more speculative than the other, although it certainly and necessarily did result in a very different narrative of the empirical facts.

In accordance with the view that "compromise between diametrically opposed principles is the very essence of any moral ideal which can be regarded as even remotely practical," Mr. Taylor defines "the highest practical moral ideal as that of a system of stable social institutions which secure to each of the individuals living under them the most complete and permanent satisfaction compatible with the enjoyment of similar satisfaction by the rest of the community." If a name is necessary, the author is quite willing to have his doctrine called "Universalistic Ethical Hedonism," if we carefully distinguish between ethical and psychological hedonism. The former "merely maintains that, as a matter of fact, the 'good' and the 'pleasant' so far coincide that the pleasantness of a mode of life may be taken as an indication of its moral rightness." The sixth chapter, on "Pleasure, Duty, and the Good," discusses the connection of the author's view with various forms of hedonism, and attempts to defend in some detail what seems to him "the essence of the hedonist position in ethics

against current criticism.' The chapter throughout is interesting and important, and the criticisms of rival ethical theories are characterized by vigor and fairness.

Towards the close of this discussion, the author gives an explicit statement of his method of treatment, which certainly is a great help in bringing all criticism of this work to a point. "I do not know whether these reflections upon the meaning of 'obligation' and 'validity' will meet with the reader's approval; to me the conclusion we have arrived at seems unavoidable so long as you accept our premises, which were, that whatever is real must be in the last resort reducible to some fact or facts which fall within an actual experience." "The purport of the present discussion may therefore be said to be the elimination from our concepts of validity and obligation of the 'symbolic' elements which in common usage they include, and the definition of them as far as possible in terms of 'pure' experience." The deductions can be refuted only by an assault on the principle itself, and not by appeals to 'conscience' or 'common sense' (pp. 366 f.). Such is undeniably the case, and those of us who find ourselves obliged to dissent from Mr. Taylor's point of view, will gladly avow that the disagreement throughout is due to a different understanding of what constitutes explanation, and to an opposed conception of epistemology. The dualism of Bradley's metaphysics and ethics may safely be said to result from the dualism of his epistemology, which looks upon our primary experiences as if they somehow brought us face to face with reality, whereas all further elaboration on the part of thought means the addition of ideal contents or wandering mental predicates, resulting in a kind of 'symbolic' knowledge that is not to be discovered in the first 'pure' experiences. For an account of the *facts* we must, on these premises, be sent to the primary data, and investigate the nature of them before they undergo 'symbolic' transformations. On the other hand, if our epistemology leads us to insist that the processes of knowledge are all the same in character, that judgment is the primary act of consciousness, that the so-called facts of experience are not given in any unique way, but are already related and interpreted by the activity of the mind, there is no reason for asserting that the later and more complex judgments are 'symbolic,' and the original ones true of actual experience. The discussion cannot, of course, be expanded here, but the point is of interest as showing that our epistemology has a very much deeper influence upon our theory of ethics than upon physics, for example. Our views of the knowing process cannot affect our *scientific* accounts of physical phenomena, but they do exercise a very vital

influence upon our accounts of moral phenomena. For in the latter science, if we start with a dualistic epistemology, we must trace all the more complex phenomena back to the 'pure' experiences, which, as 'actual,' rather than 'symbolic,' must be the source of validity. But if we hold that knowing is all of a piece, and that in knowledge there is no such distinction as 'speculative' and 'real,' we look upon our latest and most highly developed judgments of moral phenomena as the explicated truth and validity of all that was implied in the earliest and simplest experiences. From this view-point, psychology can in no sense claim to give an account of the real *facts*, since its whole procedure is based upon abstractions which are made solely for methodological purposes.—It may not be irrelevant to say, by way of an additional remark, that the only manner in which we can escape from subjectivism in ethics, as in matters pertaining to truth and knowledge, lies in a recognition of the fact that the consistency at which we aim is not solely an inner agreement within the circle of our own individual experiences, but an agreement between our experiences and an order of reality which has its being without us—a truth of which Locke, in spite of his definition of knowledge, was fully aware. When one passes from "I ought" to "you ought," one does not mean, in the opinion of the reviewer, simply "you must if your theory is to correspond with your practice," or "you must unless you are prepared to play false to your own scheme of life," or to the code of your class of society or nation (*cf.* pp. 357 ff.), but one means also that you are obligated in virtue of the fact that we all in common possess an essential moral nature. If one asserts that "you ought" to accept the conclusion of a syllogism, one means it not merely hypothetically (*i. e.*, if your theory is to be consistent), but that you must recognize its validity in virtue of the very constitution of rationality in which we all are participants. Furthermore, this kind of 'objectivity' can be explained only on the conviction that what holds good for reason depends upon and is valid for an order of reality without us.

"The Goal of Ethics," which is the title of Chapter VII, raises the question how far and on what lines the duality of the moral ideal is "soluble within the limits of the ethical experience and how far that experience would need to be modified in order to set it finally free from the taint of self-contradiction." "In attempting to free itself from its inherent inconsistencies morality will be found to transform itself into religion." The present chapter, however, attacks the problem without trespassing beyond "the limits of ethical science." Within such limits, it follows from the general position advanced that

the contrast between the ideal and actual cannot be overcome, and a reconciliation can be merely approximate. The treatment of this problem carries with it interesting discussions of the relation between the two requisites, 'harmoniousness' and 'comprehensiveness,' of the antinomy of the attainability and unattainability of the ethical end, of the antithesis between the 'form' and 'content' of ethics, of various views of 'immortality,' and of the ideal of a perfect human society regarded as an incentive, and the actual existence of the realized ideal regarded as a full and complete satisfaction of its constituent members. The source of the antithesis and contradictions is found in "the temporal character of the moral experience, in virtue of which ideal and achievement inevitably fall apart" (p. 423). The only complete satisfaction must be one "arising from the conviction that our lives, . . . are 'as functions of the perfect universe.'" But even this leads us to a consciousness "of our own fundamental identity with an order which fulfils itself no less in blunders, mistakes, sins, and ultimately perhaps in our extinction as finite individuals, than in our highest successes. As functions of that universe we are already perfect, and know ourselves to be so."

This naturally leads to the closing chapter, which has the significant title, "Beyond Good and Bad." Since the religious experience is the final form in which our practical aspirations express themselves, it must be examined to ascertain whether we may at last discover those characteristics which are essential to a 'pure' experience. If we fail in this search, it follows that "ethics, as the science which describes the practical side of our experience as human beings, cannot be in any case based upon preconceived metaphysical certainties." The main purpose, then, of this concluding discussion leads to the establishment, in accordance with the same method hitherto employed, of two leading results, which can be most briefly stated in the author's own words: "(a) That the religious experience itself, when tested at the bar of metaphysics, is found to be full of unresolved and unresolvable contradictions and inconsistencies, and therefore to require modification to an unknown extent and in unknown directions before it could be accepted as a finally satisfactory account of the world of experienced reality; and (b) that in the religious experience . . . the narrowly and purely ethical or moral concepts with which we have hitherto been working . . . are already so transformed as to be emptied of all significance; in a word, that you cannot become truly 'religious' without at the same time becoming something more—or less—than moral" (p. 427).

Before closing this review, which has already surpassed ordinary space limits, it may not be inappropriate to remark that the writer is conscious that possibly it is somewhat unfair to oppose in a book review a radically different standpoint to a position developed at length in a treatise of such a comprehensive nature as Mr. Taylor's volume enjoys. By those who find themselves in fundamental agreement with the author's tenets, the work doubtless will be greeted as an important restatement of their own views. But however approached, it would seem, in the opinion of one reader at least, that the discussion is marred by a fatal gift of a certain kind of "cleverness," and also by a tortuous mode of treatment which becomes wearisome in its repetitions and qualifications.

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*The Neo-Platonists.* A study in the History of Hellenism.

By THOMAS WHITTAKER. Cambridge, The University Press, 1901.

—pp. xiii, 231.

The fashion of tracing everything that is significant in the intellectual life of Greece, whether in religion, art, or philosophy, to an Oriental or Egyptian origin became obsolescent with the dawn of modern historical criticism. The two German writers who made valiant attempts to rehabilitate the old way of looking at things gained some notoriety, but scarcely even a serious hearing of their claims. With respect to classical Greece, at least, the pendulum has swung to the extreme, and cautious writers are even chary in admitting that the tales of the travels of the philosophers have any foundation in fact. Neo-Platonism, however, has longest withstood this tendency. The reasons are obvious. The similarity of the mysticism, in which that philosophy culminates, with the mysticism of the East is most striking. An acquaintance, on the part of its representative thinkers, with the philosophies of the East was not only possible but highly probable. We know, at least, that Plotinus while living in Alexandria had heard enough about the philosophies of India and Persia to make him desirous of acquiring a more accurate and first-hand knowledge of them, and that, with that end in view, he joined the ill-fated expedition of the Emperor Gordian against Persia. We know that Plotinus's famous disciple Porphyry belonged to the Semitic race, and was a Greek only by adoption. Moreover, the attitude of resignation and detachment from the world required, in the full acceptance of mysticism and all that it logically implies, is foreign to the character of the independent, cheerful, freedom-loving